

NATIONAL INSTITUTION OF FINE ARTS,
ABINGDON STREET.

The Portland Galleries, opposite to the Polytechnic Institution, are now open to the public, and contain an interesting collection of 381 works of art. The advantage to be found in these galleries is, that every picture, being well hung and well lighted, is seen to advantage. Having given so much of our space to an account of the proceedings of the Art-Union, we must be brief on the present occasion in our notices of this and the other art-collections which have been opened during the week. Mr. R. S. Lauder's picture of "The Crucifixion" (72) is more powerful than pleasing, and is not likely to enhance his reputation with the multitude. The introduction of a mass of drapery about the figure of the Saviour is without justification. The genius which is seen in the picture does not compensate for its defects. "Christ teaching Humility" (167), by the same painter, is a better example of Mr. Lauder's art. Mrs. McLan has a large picture (245), representing, under the title of "The Highlands, 1852," the embarkation of "old and young—men, women, and children," for Australia, after the "clearing away" of their homes. The group on the left side of the picture, in the foreground, has all the feeling and beauty which characterized some earlier works of this lady. One of the cleverest pictures in the collection is (255) "Free Companions," by Mr. Glass, and it shows, moreover, what is always satisfactory to notice, a very great advance on the part of the artist. The treatment is exceedingly clever. The bit of the first horse, by the way, wants a strap. There is a charming head by Mr. Inskip (51), "A Young Villager," and Mr. Barraud's "Go, and sin no more" should not be passed over. Messrs. Williams, sen. A. W. Williams, G. A. Williams, and Sidney Percy, exhibit a large number of pleasing, and in some cases admirable, landscapes. They paint, unluckily, so much like one another, and so often like themselves, that when seen altogether, the claims for admiration are less than when seen separately. (62) "Carnarvon Castle," by E. Williams, sen. (69) "Nant Francon, North Wales," by Alfred Williams, and (229) "View on the Thames at Medmenham," by G. A. Williams, have marks of commendation in our catalogue. Mr. Hulme has made a very considerable advance as a landscape-painter; in proof of which see (234), called "Tranquillity—Scene in North Wales;" and the same may be said of Mr. A. Provis, whose interiors, (272) for example, "An old Farmhouse at Pavinpol," are exceedingly clever in their way. Mr. A. Montague paints more carefully than heretofore: (12), "Delft," and (212), "A Dutch Port," are good specimens. Mr. Dibden's "Sketch in Hyde-park," (33), and Mr. Dawson's "London Sunrise," (296), are both clever pictures. Mr. Pasmore has some jolly sketches: Mr. Wingfield some of his smooth bits of Hampton Court, &c.

THE NEW SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN
WATER COLOURS.

NOTWITHSTANDING some criticisms to the contrary, we have no hesitation in pronouncing Mr. Haghe's picture, the Magistrates' Room at Bruges (74), "Visit of Marguerite of Austria, Duchess of Parma," as the most wonderful painting in point of mechanical execution ever executed in water colours. The extraordinary room therein represented is in the *Palais de Justice*: a view is given of its elaborate fireplace in our fifth volume (p. 36). According to Mr. Haghe, the architect was Lancelot Blondeel, of Bruges, and the sculpture and carvings were executed by Herman Glesenscamp, Rogier de Smet, and Adrian Raech. "A Hunchback: Story-teller relating one of the Arabian Nights' Tales in a Coffee-house of Damascus," by Mr. Henry Warren, although less pleasing than some of his other works, is a truthful depiction of character and costume, which should be engraved. The hunchback will be remembered by those who saw the Syrian family at the Egyptian hall.

Mr. Wehnert has a thoughtful picture from Edgar Poe's "Raven,"—

—"Vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the
lost Lenore."

Mr. Edward Corbould's "Godiva" (247) is a rich piece of flesh-colouring, but an awkward picture. Mr. Davidson has some excellent landscapes—"The Avenue," (210) is a clever specimen; and Mr. Bennett has produced a number of truthful transcripts of green country always pleasant to look on. Mr. Mapleton's works show a careful study of nature, with a satisfactory result. Amongst Mr. Fahey's agreeable contributions is a very pretty view (18) of "Selborne, Hants, with the House of Gilbert White." Mr. Chase gives an elaborate view of "The Cellini Drawing-room, Fontainebleau." Mr. Kearney's (No. 162) "She Sleeps: her Breathings are not heard," is superior to the same artist's rendering of Moore's

"Rich and rare were the gems she wore."

(169) "Highland Reapers," by J. H. Moir, is a very good picture, reminding us a little too much of Topham. As to No. 243, "Nice," by Mr. C. Vacher, we should simply repeat it à l'Anglais, and add, very. His more important work, "Sunset from the Cornici, Gulf of Genoa," (180) is noticeable for high finish and right feeling. Mr. Howar's (177) "On the Quai St. Sever, at Rouen;" Mr. T. L. Rowbotham's views in Wales and elsewhere; Mr. McKean's "Pembroke Castle," and many others would have notice if we had space.

Panorama painting and other calls have evidently interfered with the production of works for this exhibition on the part of some of the leading members.

We must postpone our notice of the Old Water Colour Gallery for a week.

SIGHTS AND SCENERY.

Royal Italian Opera-house.—For Danisetti's fine opera "I Martiri" some excellent architectural scenery has been prepared by Messrs. Grieve and Telhin. The story is laid at "Maltene, capital of Armenia," under Diocletian; and we have in the second act a forum, with temples and statues about. In the third act is the temple of Jupiter, and, as a closing scene, the entrance (the *Peristylum*, as it is not quite correctly called in the books,) leading to the amphitheatre, with some clever iron gates. The whole are exceedingly well painted. In this opera Madame Julianne has made a decided hit, and Signor Tamberlik astonishes even those who thought best of him. A scene between these artists in the last act is as fine a piece of singing as was ever heard. The difficulties in the way of the appearance of Madlle. Wagner have not yet been removed. A letter from the lady's father entirely exonerates Mr. Gye from the imputation of any improper endeavours to take the new artist out of the hands of his rival, Mr. Lumley.

The Haymarket Theatre.—There is some nicely painted rural scenery in Mr. Mark Lemon's excellent drama "Mind your own business." The last scene, too, a room in a country house, with bow-window, cleverly managed, is very characteristic and pleasing. The piece itself more deserves to be called a "play," than some in five acts, which take that title by right, and it is so admirably set forth by Mr. Webster, Mrs. Stirling, Miss Reynolds, and Mr. Leigh Murray, that it should be seen by every lover of good acting and writing. The ensemble is perfect.

The Campaigns of Wellington.—The diorama which has been opened at the "Gallery of Illustration" in Regent-street, depicting the Wellington Campaigns, takes the spectator (with a pleasant narrative by Mr. Stocquer) through India, Portugal, Spain, France, and Belgium, ending of course with Waterloo. It is inferior to its predecessor, "The Overland Route," both in point of subjects and of art, and is not likely, we should think, to take the same hold of the public that the latter did, notwithstanding the magic in the title. It has,

nevertheless, scenes of very great merit and beauty, and well deserves to be visited. We should have enjoyed it more ourselves if we had not been exposed to a draught sharp enough to cut one's hair. It is much to be regretted that those who have the arrangement of rooms of this sort, where the public assemble in large numbers, do not attend more to proper ventilation and the avoidance of draughts of wind. We found ourselves the other evening listening to Mr. Albert Smith's entertainment at the Egyptian Hall, and came out at the close with a positive congestion of the lungs. Enjoyment in such an atmosphere is difficult,—apoplexy probable.

The Marionettes have now fairly established themselves in the estimation of the public, and as an acknowledgment, the management bestow greater care on the appointments and scenery. What materially tends to the appreciation is the reliance that can be placed on the company—no legal injunction, no disappointment arising from the hoarseness of the tenor, or the sprained ankle of the *Première Danseuse*, occur: there is no crookedness of temper, whatever there may be of limb. "Aladdin" is in all respects capitally done.

The Amateur Musical Society held the third concert of their sixth season on Monday last, when were rendered, in a manner that would have reflected credit on a selected professed band, one of Haydn's symphonies, Beethoven's overture "Egmont," *inter multa alia*. It may not, perhaps, be invidious to particularise the finished fantasia for the violin by Mr. Louis D'Egville, on airs from "Lucresia Borgia," or the charming performance of Mr. Pollock on the oboe, in the selection from "L'Elisir d'Amore," or in Mr. Osborn's Septett, in which the piano, played, we believe, by the Hon. A. Wellesley, bore so efficient a part. These concerts want but little to become perfect, and that little might be gained by another rehearsal.

MAGNETIC SCIENCE YET IN ITS
INFANCY.

AN important discovery, it is said, has been made by Mr. George Little, the electrical engineer, in which continuous streams of electricity can be produced from single magnets, and be made to decompose water, precipitate metals from solution, produce constant power in electro-magnets, and work the chemical printing and double-needle telegraph. Magnetic science is but in its infancy, and we should not be surprised, as before said, to find it evolve almost magical results. Dr. Faraday lately showed the possibility of literally collecting the terrestrial magnetism, and accumulating its force in apparatus used for the purpose. This he showed could be done by revolving a wheel in a certain direction, cutting the lines of magnetic force or winding them up as it were on the disc or wheel while placed in the proper direction, and not in any other. Here is something that almost looks like that reality of which the circling manœuvres of the magician's wand were but a superstitious and vain fore-shadowing! To what pitch of intensity such a power may yet be evolved, or where each discovery may end, it is hard to say. We not long since noted other magical-looking experiments by Faraday, in which the diamagnetic force was brought into play so as to cause obvious resistance in moving copper blades, &c. through the air between the electro-magnetic poles.

The magnetic and diamagnetic forces are clearly those which stand next in co-relation to the mechanical forces of cohesion and elasticity, and to the cosmical force of weight or gravity and its antithesis or negative, and they may come to display *subversive* influences over these, are long, that will astonish even a generation familiar with electro-telegraphic wonders. What would they say, for instance, to such a temporary subversion of the cohesive forces in a deal board, or a stone wall, as would enable a magician like Faraday to pass through it as if it were so much air, or so much dust in the sunbeam? Doubtless such an idea would be quite extravagant, as an expectation gravely entertained. We adduce it merely to